



In view of the ongoing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has issued the statement below on a temporary VMD enforcement policy. This statement sets out the temporary relaxation of specific provisions of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 (VMR), which only applies in the following circumstances:

- the SQP retailer is located in an area where the Government has deployed local lockdown measures; and/or
- an SQP needs to self-isolate as they have tested positive for the virus or due to contact tracing.

## SQP: prescribing and authorisation of supply

Relaxation of enforcement during COVID-19

### Regulations for Suitably Qualified Persons (SQP)

Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 – Schedule 3 paragraph 14. In particular:

*(4) A suitably qualified person may only supply a veterinary medicinal product classified as POM-VPS, NFA-VPS or AVM-GSL, and may only supply it from—*

*(a) premises approved by the Secretary of State as being suitable for the storage and supply of veterinary medicinal products by a suitably qualified person;*

*(b) premises registered as a pharmacy with the General Pharmaceutical Council or with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland; or*

*(c) practice premises registered under these Regulations as being premises from which a veterinary surgeon supplies veterinary medicinal products.*

*(5) A suitably qualified person who supplies a product classified as POM-VPS or NFA-VPS must either—*

*(a) hand over or despatch the product personally;*

*(b) ensure that, when the product is handed over or despatched, the suitably qualified person is in a position to intervene if necessary; or*

*(c) check the product after it has been allocated for supply to a customer, and be satisfied that the person handing over or dispatching it is competent to do so.*

### During the COVID-19 pandemic

Effective from 1 September 2020, in view of the unique challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) will adopt the approach set out below to the enforcement of the above requirements, for those circumstances where:

- the SQP retailer is located in an area where the Government has deployed local lockdown measures; and/or

- an SQP needs to self-isolate as they have tested positive for the virus or due to contact tracing.

In practice, this means that during this period and under these circumstances SQPs will be allowed to prescribe and authorise supply remotely.

The VMD will not issue an improvement notice in respect of a breach of paragraph 14(4) and (5) of Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 (VMR) during this period and under the specified circumstances, in cases where the following procedures are observed.

The SQP is still responsible for the prescription and supply and therefore must:

- be the person that has the conversation/consultation with the animal owner;
- be the person that makes the prescribing decision;
- be satisfied that the person handing over or dispatching the prescribed product is competent to do so.

The SQP must then instruct (in writing or orally) the person at the premises from which the physical supply is to be made (which must be premises falling within paragraph 14(4)(a) to (c)) to hand over or dispatch the specific medicine that the SQP has prescribed.

SQPs must record details of their conversations with clients, including the information gathered on which their prescribing decisions are based, so they can ensure consistency with their own records and the records of the supplies at the relevant approved SQP retail premises/pharmacies/veterinary practice premises. If they're orally instructing a person at those premises to hand over/dispatch the product, the SQP must also record that person's name, the date and time, and their prescribing instructions. The documentation and records must be kept for at least 5 years.

For the avoidance of doubt, the VMR continue to apply. This is a statement of a temporary VMD enforcement policy in relation to specific obligations under the VMR only. The VMD may continue to take action to enforce those obligations in cases where the procedures described above are not followed. This statement is kept under regular review and may be amended from time to time. The current version of the statement may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-vmd-news-and-guidance>.